



Government  
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MEMORANDUM

NOTE DE SERVICE

TO  
A

Dr. A.J. Liston  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Health Protection Branch

FROM  
DE

Director General  
Environmental Health Directorate

SECURITY - CLASSIFICATION - DE SÉCURITÉ

OUR FILE / NOTRE RÉFÉRENCE

YOUR FILE / VOTRE RÉFÉRENCE

DATE  
August 25, 1986

SUBJECT  
OBJET

Review of Thomson Report and Ministerial Correspondence on  
Environmental Hypersensitivity

1. Departmental staff and ministers have received numerous enquiries concerning non-specific allergy problems attributed to exposure to "synthetic chemicals"; such problems have been classified as environmental hypersensitivity, total allergy syndrome, or 20th century disease. In November 1984, the Minister of Health for Ontario (then Keith Norton), set up a medical committee to examine the whole question of environmental hypersensitivity, including the need for financial support through the health care system. A report was subsequently issued and the Department has been asked to comment on the findings.
2. Because inquiries concerning environmental hypersensitivity often refer to chemicals in the environment as the cause of the condition, they are usually referred to the Environmental Health Directorate. This Directorate has been able to address satisfactorily some of the issues, particularly when specific problems such as indoor air quality, and exposure to tobacco smoke were involved. However, problems are also perceived to arise from exposure to chemicals in food. Moreover, many of the questions relate to diagnosis and treatment, and in particular, to the costs of treatment, which EHD is ill-equipped to answer.
3. Since many of the symptoms described appear to resemble an allergic response, I would suggest that questions of environmental sensitivity would be dealt with more appropriately within LCDC. Furthermore, I recommend that consideration be given at a future meeting of the Branch Executive Committee to developing a Branch policy on this matter.

  
E. Somers